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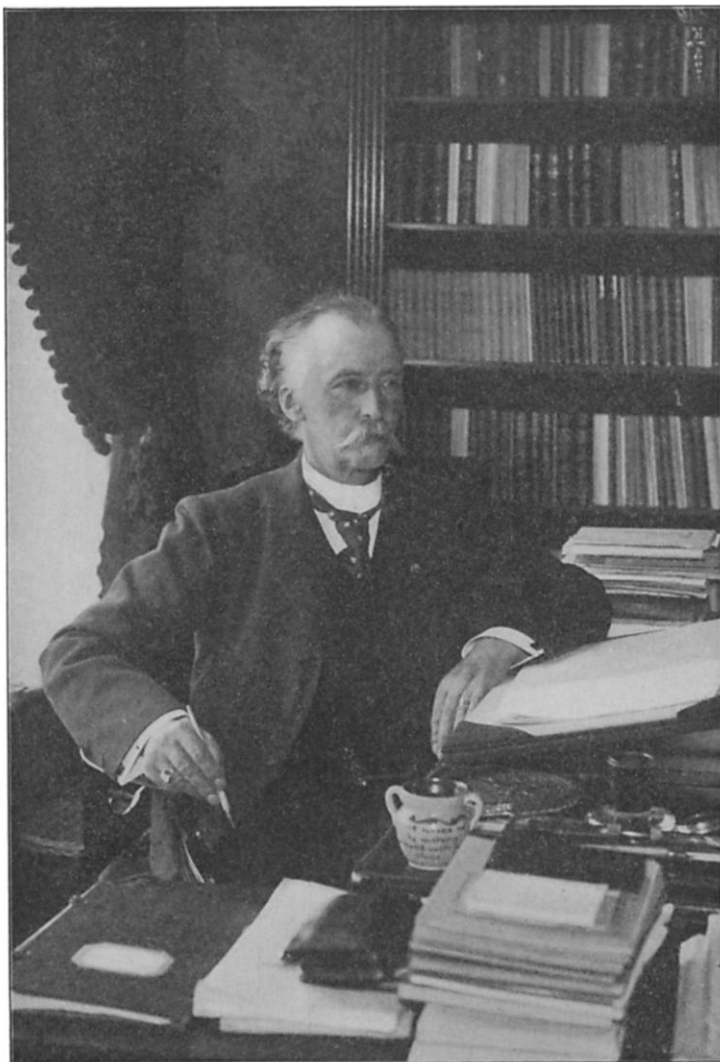
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THE LATE PROFESSOR TIELE.

By REV. LOUIS H. JORDAN, B.D.,
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CORNELIUS PETRUS TIELE was born near Leiden on December 16, 1830. His studies, general and professional, were pursued at Amsterdam. Early deciding to enter the ministry of the Dutch Remonstrant church, he eventually became a pastor, and filled with great acceptance several pulpits to which he was successively called. How many of those who now eagerly read his books are aware that he has also printed several volumes of sermons? Were their knowledge wider, they would secure these publications likewise, and they would be amply rewarded. But in 1877 Dr. Tiele confronted the great turning-point of his life. He was invited to give up the pulpit for a university chair; and, with mingled hesitation and gladness, he decided to answer in the affirmative. He never, indeed, separated himself from the work which he deliberately chose at the beginning. On the contrary, when he died, he was a professor (and the president) of the Remonstrant Seminary in Leiden; and he had long acted as a sort of bishop in Holland in the interest of the Remonstrant church. Nor did his critical studies contrive in any degree to lessen his loyalty of attachment to the Christian faith; rather did they perceptibly increase it. But henceforth all the outcome of his strength was devoted to his students. Resigning his charge at Rotterdam in the year already named, he was appointed a professor of theology in the University of Leiden; and in that little northern city he cheerfully spent the remainder of his strenuous, fruitful life.

The chair which Dr. Tiele filled for nearly a quarter of a century, and to which his rare learning lent such exceptional distinction, was that of the history and philosophy of religion. It was in the latter department, in particular, that his industry and influence have achieved so much. The history of religion



THE LATE PROFESSOR CORNELIUS P. TIELE, D. D.

must needs, of course, first be studied ; and, in this connection, Professor Tiele was an unwearied and most successful explorer. But in the more difficult task of framing a rationale of the whole, and of reaching safe and verifiable generalizations, he had few (if any) equals. It goes without saying that, twenty-five years ago, such investigations as he embarked upon were not viewed with any special favor. Even today, the voice of the objector may sometimes be heard. It is contended that religion is a domain too sacred, alike in itself and in its associations, to tolerate the intrusion of the purely scientific inquirer. His methods are too drastic and his temper too cold. Thus it was in effect held, by a strange obscurantism, that a man's *religion* (of all things!) was to be received *en bloc*, and was not to be too closely scrutinized. Happily all this is now changed ; and, with frankness let it be stated, no country has done more to bring this result to pass than Holland has done, and no Dutch professor has contributed so much effective help as Professor Tiele. To him is due, in no small measure, that official act of the government which has made the Dutch universities foremost today in Europe among the expositors of a scientific theology ; and it was he also who, by his patient, reasonable, and reverent methods of investigation, vindicated the right of religion to take her place as youngest daughter among the sciences. He has demonstrated, what others have tentatively maintained, that no man who knows only one religion can be said to know *even* one ; and that the Christian religion in particular may be entirely misjudged by its adherents, unless they have compared and contrasted it with other religions. It will then be discovered that it has much more in common with its predecessors and contemporaries than most men have ever dreamed of ; but that it exhibits, also, points and domains of divergence which have a significance of the very highest moment. And then, with the highly trained skill of an expert, Professor Tiele proceeded deftly to unfold the meaning of those numerous subtle factors of consciousness which God has graciously implanted in all mankind.

Professor Tiele has now been taken from us ; and one cannot

but recall, in the presence of this bereavement, the unexpected death a few months earlier of another diligent worker in this field. Of late there has been manifest a disposition to minimize unduly the outcome and the permanency of Professor Max Müller's labors; but the force of this reaction is already largely spent. It is true that Max Müller's conclusions, like Hegel's, were much too often governed by his philosophical point of view; but, due allowance being made for this defect, it is undoubtedly a very valuable legacy that he has bequeathed to us. The Oxford professor's name is just as certain to live and be revered, during coming generations, as is that of his *confrère* at Leiden. The two men were friends, and knew how to appreciate the quality of each other's patient investigations. Their spheres were different, and so it mattered less that in equipment they themselves were different. The Oxford *savant* undertook the work of a pioneer, and he successfully attained the goal he had in view. No doubt he aimed at doing much more than this, nor did he wholly fail in his larger quest; but his real achievement was one which his felicitous speech and his representative position fitted him very admirably to accomplish. Dr. Tiele, on the other hand, approached his task with that greater seriousness and singleness of purpose which was the natural outcome of his temperament and training. He addressed himself, for the most part, to an entirely different audience. He, too, was a singularly graceful writer, but he made no special endeavor to catch the popular ear. His comprehensive knowledge and accuracy were simply marvelous; but, while he always had a vast accumulation of facts ready at his command, he never seemed to lose control of them, or to become perplexed amid their varying implications. At the bar of his judgment, every jot and tittle of evidence was certain to receive its full quota of value. Moreover, his understanding of the more subtle and subjective elements in the problem was invariably sympathetic and profound. Hence his work will endure and preserve its vitality, while much that his Oxford contemporary has written is doomed to be outgrown and forgotten.

Of the permanent issues of this laborious and fruitful life,

only a summary statement can here be presented. Let it be premised that the impulse which Dr. Tiele has given to the scientific study of religion will not be interrupted even by his death ; indeed, through the attention which that event has directed toward his chosen field of work, the original momentum has rather been increased. One cannot but regret that certain projects of the professor can never now be realized ; his silent unfinished manuscripts, many of them being in the form of condensed and fragmentary notes, remind us of how irremediable must remain our loss. Possibly some of his latest work has been carried forward to such a stage that we may yet receive one or more volumes from the press ; but in any case it is to be hoped that the best of his furtive sketches (which were very numerous indeed) may shortly be collected and collated, and then issued under the title of essays, in some convenient and popular form.

When, however, we turn to the completed writings of this powerful and stimulating thinker, whose works are almost as familiar in France and Germany as they are in Holland, we have every reason to be grateful that his life was spared so long. The volume which first made him known to English-speaking students was his *Outlines of the History of Religion*, a translation of which appeared in 1877. The book has passed through half a dozen editions in this dress, and is still selling well, but it has been practically superseded. Dr. Tiele spoke sometimes rather bitterly of his attempt to alter or suppress this English version, seeing that in certain particulars it no longer voiced his convictions ; but, his efforts proving futile, he succeeded in having prepared a new and completely revised edition of it. This work has appeared in German, through the co-operation of Rev. Nathan Söderblom—until recently pastor of the Swedish congregation in Paris, but now professor of the history of religion in the University of Upsala ; and it contains many entirely new contributions from the pen of Dr. Tiele. Long prior, however, to the publication of the *Outlines*—viz., in 1864, when the writer was only thirty years of age—there appeared his *De Godsdienst von Zarathustra*, the high merit of which was at once perceived and acknowledged. Next must be mentioned his *Comparative*

History of the Ancient Religions of Egypt and the Semitic Peoples, or, as it is entitled in the English edition, *Comparative History of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian (Hamitic and Semitic) Religions*. Under "Mesopotamian Religion" he proposed to include studies, respectively, of Babylonian-Assyrian, Phœnician, and Israelitish religions. This was truly a Herculean task, and I am not sure that it has been possible for the author to complete it to his own satisfaction; but it is a work of the very highest value. In 1882 there appeared in English that section of it (now, unfortunately, out of print) which deals with the religion of Egypt; and it is not too much to say that students find it still indispensable, although thirty years have passed since it was written. Then we have his *History of Religion in Ancient Times, i. e.*, down to the days of Alexander the Great. The beliefs of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Persians are all passed in review, and with most skilful incisiveness. The first volume was issued some years ago, and Part I of Vol. II followed in due course; it is matter for sincere congratulation that Part II of the second volume was completed and sent to press not many months ago. It was the last serious bit of work to which Dr. Tiele put his hand; and in a private note to the writer, when alluding to its approaching appearance, he says: "Vol. II, which treats of the Zarathustrian religion, will be a work complete in itself, and will be found more full than Vol. I. Mr. Nariman, a Parsee scholar, is translating it into English on behalf of his fellow-countrymen in that distant land." And so, by a curiously circuitous route, a book, written in Leiden, comes back to Europe by the way of India; just as the Sanskrit Scriptures were some years ago translated and sent to the Hindus by way of Oxford. In both cases, it will be noted, the medium of interpretation selected was our world-wide English tongue! This work contains Dr. Tiele's final conclusions concerning Zoroaster and his complex religious teachings—a study which the professor never wholly abandoned since the day on which there appeared his earlier publication of 1864, to which reference has already been made.

Another book remains to be mentioned, and it is perhaps the masterpiece, viz., the *Elements of the Science of Religion*. This work

appeared in two volumes, and comprises the two series of Gifford Lectures, which were delivered in Scotland in 1896 and 1897. The author, with characteristic modesty, says in his preface that "it is intended to serve as an introduction to the science of religion, and not as a hand-book of the subject;" but we have here a truly monumental piece of scholarship, and no one who pretends to be abreast of contemporary studies in religion can afford to leave it unread. It contains the results of Dr. Tiele's fullest and latest researches. In that magnificent article on "Religion" which he contributed to the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*—ample in length, and yet so marvelously compact—we have the foundation of the structure which the Gifford Lectures have so grandly brought into view. This is not a surmise merely, but a supposition of which Dr. Tiele has quite frankly admitted the truth, as regards more particularly the earlier series of the lectures. His various other books show him to be a patient and successful student—tirelessly collecting, comparing, and classifying the multifarious phenomena with which he had to do; but here we see him as the master, skillfully interpreting these phenomena, and unfolding the laws which account for their origin, persistency, and progeny.

[*To be concluded in the next number.*]